

**The Role of a Professional Regulatory Body
in Achieving the Priorities of Teacher
Education**

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Introduction

With its population of just over five million, Scotland has an education system which is significantly different from the other parts of the United Kingdom. One aspect of this difference is seen in the priorities for Teacher Education in Scotland set in the Scottish Government's publication, *Teaching Scotland's Future* (Donaldson, 2011). (This report is often referred to as the Donaldson Report - after Graham Donaldson who had been Her Majesty's Senior Chief Inspector in Scotland until retirement when he was commissioned by the Scottish Government to undertake a review of teacher education. *Teaching Scotland's Future* was generally well received by the educational community in Scotland.

The Priorities for Teacher Education in Scotland

The report recognised the strengths of Scottish teacher education but then went on to identify strategic priorities by stating that 'the two most important factors which promote excellent education are the quality of the teaching profession and of its leadership' (Donaldson, 2011:82) before giving 50 recommendations. These recommendations, 'through the lens of career-long teacher education', were intended to further develop the quality of the teaching profession and its leadership.

When Donaldson reported, Scotland had had a set of Teacher Education Standards for close to a decade but two of his recommendations were:

Recommendation 35

The Professional Standards need to be revised to create a coherent overarching framework and enhanced with practical illustrations of the Standards. This overall framework should reflect a reconceptualised model of teacher professionalism

(Donaldson, 2011:95).

Recommendation 36

A new 'Standard for Active Registration' should be developed to clarify expectations of how fully registered teachers are expected to continue to develop their skills and competences. This standard should be challenging and aspirational, fully embracing enhanced professionalism for teachers in Scotland

(Donaldson, 2011:95).

GTC (General Teaching Council) Scotland is the relevant Professional Statutory Regulatory Body (PSRB) which sets the Standards for teachers in Scotland. As such it accepted these recommendations and set about a major review which involved extensive consultation with the profession and other stakeholders. A Steering Group with a wide range of stakeholders, including parents and students, was set up and three writing groups formed. Face-to-face consultation meetings were held in four Scottish cities and online responses also sought. Social media (such as

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Twitter) were used and synchronous online consultation meetings through Glow TV¹ were held to encourage engagement from remoter parts of Scotland. (Glow is Scotland's National Intranet for schools which allows joined-up working the length and breadth of Scotland. The main purpose of Glow is to enhance the quality of learning and teaching in the classroom by fully supporting Curriculum for Excellence (CfE)², the curriculum for Scottish schools for learners from age 3 to 18.)

Drafts of revised Standards were presented to a working group of GTC Scotland's Education Committee and eventually final drafts were presented to the full GTC Scotland Council for approval. The Standards which emerged from this extensive exercise were:

- The Standards for Registration (Provisional, Full)
- The Standard for Career-Long Professional Learning
- The Standards for Leadership and Management (Middle Leadership, Headship)³

The Standards for Registration are mandatory requirements which all teachers in Scotland must meet. Provisional Registration is awarded on the completion of a GTCS accredited university programme of Initial Teacher Education (ITE) with Full Registration then following the completion of a probationary period, normally one year within the Teacher Induction Scheme⁴. The Standard for Full Registration thereafter remains as the baseline Standard for competence which all teachers have to maintain. The Standard for Career-Long Professional Learning addresses Donaldson's notion of a Standard which will be 'challenging and aspirational', relevant to classroom teachers throughout their careers. The Standards for Leadership and Management provide a pathway for those teachers wishing to move into Middle Leadership and ultimately, for some, Headship.

Aspects of Professional Development in the Scottish Teacher Education Standards

All of the Standards, no matter who their intended audience is, have various things in common. Each, for example, presents the following model of the aspects of professional development which GTC Scotland considers to be relevant to all teachers, at all levels, within Scotland.

¹ <http://www.educationscotland.gov.uk/usingglowandict/glow/glowspotlights/gloweventsschedule.asp>

² <http://www.educationscotland.gov.uk/thecurriculum/whatiscurriculumforexcellence/>

³ <http://www.gtcs.org.uk/standards/standards.aspx>

⁴ <http://www.in2teaching.org.uk/teacher-induction-scheme/teacher-induction-scheme.aspx>



Figure 1. GTC Scotland three aspects of professional development.

The three elements of Professional Values and Personal Commitment, Professional Knowledge and Understanding, and Professional Skills and Abilities are seen by GTC Scotland as being central to what it takes to be a teacher. GTC Scotland sees teaching as a complex amalgam of these three aspects, fitting in with Donaldson's wish for 'a reconceptualised model of teacher professionalism' (Recommendation 35) and 'enhanced professionalism for teachers in Scotland' (Recommendation 36). Teaching is not seen as simply a craft where a period of apprenticeship may make someone a practitioner - but rather as a complex and multi-faceted professional activity.

GTCS Model of the Teacher

In its submission to the review which led to *Teaching Scotland's Future*, GTC Scotland presented the following model of the beginning teacher.

Initial Teacher Education should prepare new teachers who:

- have professional values,
- are reflective and innovative,
- are experts in pedagogy,
- are agents of change rather than recipients of it,
- are autonomous while recognising their place within systems,
- have commitment, resilience and high levels of self-efficacy,
- have appropriate subject content and pedagogic content knowledge,
- are accountable and consider the impact of their teaching on pupils and learners,
- know about research and scholarship and where appropriate actively practise research,
- are committed to their own ongoing professional development,
- are aware of education's links to other fields,

- are committed to working with other professionals within and beyond education.

The antecedents of this model lie within the work and writings of various educationalists such as Lawrence Stenhouse, Lee Shulman, Andy Hargreaves, Michael Fullan, Linda Darling-Hammond, Marilyn Cochran Smith and Judyth Sachs. In terms of views and approaches to professionalism, GTC Scotland's recent thinking has been influenced by the writing of Julia Evetts who has considered traditional forms of occupational professionalism, then contrasted more recent forms of organisational professionalism before proposing a hybrid form of contemporary professionalism. Evetts' (2012) hybrid professionalism encourages the autonomy and empowerment of the individual professional practitioner but also recognises relevant system accountability.

As well as being submitted to the Donaldson Review, this model of the teacher underpins the Scottish Teacher Education Standards and will also be found presented in a GTCS publication entitled the Guidelines for Programmes of Initial Teacher Education¹ which is published by the GTCS - as the relevant PSRB in Scotland. The document sets out GTC Scotland's determination of what constitutes a Teaching Qualification and what the parameters are for all ITE programmes. (These are two of GTC Scotland's statutory roles in Scottish education.) However, it is important to note that GTC Scotland sees teacher education as being a wider concept than just ITE.

What is Teacher Education?

The Continuum of Teacher Education

GTC Scotland would suggest that there is a continuum of teacher education which, in Scotland, would have on it the following stages and features.

The early phase of teacher professional development begins with Initial Teacher Education. In Scotland all ITE is entirely through programmes delivered in partnership by universities, Local Authorities and schools. The focus of ITE is on students meeting the Standard for Provisional Registration by the end of their programmes; four year undergraduate programmes or one year PGDE (Professional Graduate Diploma in Education) programmes. The second stage of the early phase of professional development is a probationary period which, for the vast majority of new teachers in Scotland, is through the Teacher Induction Scheme (TIS). This is a one year scheme guaranteeing graduating teachers a salaried post in a school. As well as reduced teaching contact new teachers are also guaranteed support and hence will have regular meetings with an identified experienced teacher who will help them with reflection and target setting. Their supporter, and perhaps others from within the leadership team of the school or even local authority, will also observe the new teacher teaching and ultimately an assessment report from the school will be sent to GTC Scotland. The success rate on the TIS is 98+% so the normal recommendation is that Full Registration be awarded. For new teachers who wish greater flexibility in their working practices there is also a Flexible Route² where part time employment can be followed - but ultimately both the TIS and the Flexible Route relate to new teachers meeting the Standard for Full Registration.

Thereafter all teachers will engage in Career-Long Professional Learning (C-LPL) which in Scotland is an annual minimum 35 hour contractual obligation for all teachers. For those teachers in classrooms it will relate either to the Standard for Full Registration or, on a voluntary basis, the Standard for Career-Long Professional Learning³ which looks in particular at accomplished teaching. For teachers who choose to follow a Leadership and Management career pathway the expectation is that, as well as whatever general C-LPL they engage in, much of their professional learning will relate to the Standards for Leadership and Management, focusing on Middle Leadership for Principal Teachers

¹ <http://www.gtcs.org.uk/web/FILES/about-gtcs/guidelines-for-ite-programmes-in-scotland.pdf>

² <http://www.in2teaching.org.uk/flexible-route/flexible-route.aspx>

³ <http://www.gtcs.org.uk/web/FILES/the-standards/standard-for-career-long-professional-learning-1212.pdf>

and Depute Heads and Headship for those either aspiring to or already in Head Teacher posts. Underpinning all of this ongoing teacher education there is a national consensus that there is a need to provide opportunities to address the C-LPL needs of individual teachers as well as looking at school and national priorities. So, while of course there will be commonalities of learning for all teachers there must also be enough flexibility in the system to meet individual needs and aspirations. A one-size fits all approach to C-LPL will simply not deliver the priorities of teacher education.

Forms of C-LPL

Fitting in with the necessity to have flexibility and individualisation in the provision of professional learning, GTC Scotland would further the proposition that teacher education should encompass different forms of C-LPL. There must be opportunities for teachers to be involved in personal approaches to their own development through taking forward training, learning or scholarship on an individual basis. GTC Scotland also actively encourages practitioner enquiry approaches and information can be found on the Council's website.¹ GTC Scotland argues that such approaches bring various benefits. They help to empower teachers and encourage them to challenge and transform education. They provide a way for teachers to monitor and develop their own practice. They encourage teachers to investigate new strategies and initiatives. Practitioner enquiry helps to increase teachers' knowledge of teaching and learning thus enabling them to make more professional and autonomous judgements and to enhance their self-esteem and professional identity.

GTC Scotland would accept that such approaches are not a panacea and that teachers involved may feel uncomfortable as deeply embedded assumptions about pedagogy are brought into question. However, whether it be through the use of supportive learning communities, coaching and mentoring or lesson study approaches, GTC Scotland would suggest that the potential benefits of practitioner enquiry far outweigh any short term discomfort caused by the questioning of hegemonic views. Indeed the OECD's Teaching and Learning International Survey (TALIS) suggests that having teachers involved in collaborative approaches to their own learning increases self-efficacy and is likely to lead to more innovative approaches to teaching and learning. (OECD, 2009; OECD, 2014) (TALIS is a survey which asks teachers and schools in national systems about their working conditions and learning environments. It covers themes such as initial teacher education and professional development; what sort of appraisal and feedback teachers get; the school climate; school leadership; and teachers' instructional beliefs and pedagogical practices. It then provides cross-country analysis that helps countries identify others facing similar challenges and learn about their policies. Twenty four countries opted to participate in the 2008 survey and thirty four in 2013. As yet, Scotland has not participated but England took part in the 2013 survey.)

Despite the economically straitened times in which we live, there are still professional learning courses available for teachers and the GTCS would suggest that resources and time should be made available to support teachers undertaking such development. It is recognised that budgets for such activities can be seen as soft targets where cuts can easily be made, but there are benefits to be had through teachers taking such programmes. The view of the GTCS is that they should certainly be there as an option – while acknowledging that other, in-school approaches may also be available and effective.

Over recent years Scotland has been increasingly supportive of teachers being involved in Masters level learning. GTC Scotland agrees that teacher education at this level, both within ITE and C-LPL, is beneficial to the individual teacher, their classes and schools, and also to education at the system

¹ <http://www.gtcs.org.uk/professional-update/practitioner-enquiry/practitioner-enquiry.aspx>

level. The Council therefore hosts on its website, on behalf of the Scottish Government and the Scottish universities involved in teacher education, the Scottish Framework for Masters in Education.¹ On the website the universities state that 'Engagement in Masters-level learning is intended to support critically-informed practice, responsive to the evolving needs of Scottish society.' They then make reference to the expectations of such learning as provided by the Scottish Credit and Qualifications Framework (SCQF).² Such practice-focused Masters-level learning it is argued should allow teachers, for example, to:

- Use a range of specialised skills, techniques, practice and/ or materials which are at the forefront of, or informed by forefront developments.
- Demonstrate originality or creativity in the application of knowledge, understanding and/or practices.
- Apply critical analysis, evaluation and synthesis to issues which are at the forefront of, or informed by developments in a subject/discipline.
- Deal with complex issues and make informed judgements in situations in the absence of complete or consistent data.

C-LPL can therefore take various forms but, if it is going to be successful, one constant, which GTC Scotland argues for from its central place in Scottish education, is that there has to be enough time, space and resource to support teachers in undertaking their professional learning, implementing change and then evaluating the impact.

Providers of Teacher Education

As stated above, all ITE in Scotland is provided through universities working in partnership with schools and local authorities. Given the complex model of the teacher put forward by the GTCS, the centrality of university provision is longstanding and fully supported in Scotland where there are no employment-based routes into teaching. However, if the different forms of C-LPL mentioned above are to be catered for then it seems likely to be by a variety of providers of teacher educations, including but also going beyond the universities. Teachers themselves, individually and collectively, have a place in self-providing. Schools and local authorities (in Scotland at least, unlike in some other parts of the UK) have a strong role to play in ensuring the provision of appropriate C-LPL. Other potential providers of professional learning will be subject associations or, increasingly, simply groups of teachers using social media to connect with likeminded colleagues, e.g. on Twitter <https://twitter.com/EDUtalkr> and <https://twitter.com/pedagoo>

Interestingly, and very actively in Scotland, teacher unions are playing a part in providing professional learning for teachers. For example, the Educational Institute of Scotland has advanced its provision of professional learning for its members by instituting a system of Learning Representatives³ whose role is to help support the C-LPL of their fellow teachers, including non-EIS members. The EIS has also worked extensively with local authorities on joint events and provision (particularly recently around the introduction of the new GTC Scotland scheme of Professional Update⁴) and with various universities on accomplished teaching and leadership developments.

Various private organisations (Non-Governmental Organisations/Charities/Interest groups/ Business/Industry) are also involved in C-LPL provision and GTC Scotland has worked extensively with some by accrediting the work they do with teachers so that those who successfully complete a

¹ <http://www.gtcs.org.uk/education-in-scotland/framework-for-masters/framework-for-masters-in-education.aspx>

² <http://scqf.org.uk/>

³ http://www.eis.org.uk/Learning_Reps/LRs_Intro.htm

⁴ <http://www.gtcs.org.uk/professional-update/professional-update.aspx>

programme or a piece of learning can then apply to the GTCS for Professional Recognition. Professional Recognition¹ offers the opportunity to teachers to be recognised as they develop as reflective, accomplished and enquiring professionals, continually enhancing their practice at all stages of their careers. It aligns primarily with the Standard for C-LPL. However, applicants may choose to reflect against the Standards for Leadership and Management or for those in Further Education the Professional Standards for Lecturers in Scotland's Colleges. It is a way of encouraging professional learning and celebrating the success of teachers. It fits in with the ideas in TALIS of developing the self-efficacy of teachers, helping to lead to successful education.

As noted above, some of the Scottish universities are absolutely centrally involved in ITE. This involvement continues into C-LPL and leadership and management development, including the provision of the Scottish Qualification for Headship (SQH), a specific GTCS accredited programme designed so that teachers can demonstrate that they have met the Standard for Headship. (It is worth noting that a new Scottish College of Educational Leadership (SCEL) has recently been formed. Details can be found at: <http://www.scelscotland.org.uk/> and one of SCEL's early tasks is to develop a new national programme for school leadership.)

The current SQH programme operates at SCQF level 11, Masters level but, as noted above, the universities are also deeply involved in the provision of more general Masters level study for teachers.

GTCS Role

Professional Statutory Regulatory Bodies are, by definition, set up by legislation. The relevant legislation for GTC Scotland is the Public Services Reform (General Teaching Council for Scotland, Order 2011).² It defines the role and remit of GTCS and gives the organisation substantial statutory powers. All teachers in Scottish state schools are legally required to be registered with GTC Scotland. The Council also has regulatory powers to deal with any issues regarding the conduct and competence of teachers, the ultimate sanction being removal from the register. In terms of helping to achieve the priorities of teacher education, for ITE the legislation gives the GTCS the role of determining what constitutes a Teaching Qualification (TQ) and setting the parameters for programmes leading to TQs. GTCS does this through issuing the Guidelines for Programmes of Initial Teacher Education and by publishing the Memorandum on Entry Requirements to Programmes of Initial Teacher Education in Scotland³, which sets minimum qualification requirements for students wishing to enter ITE. All programmes then need to be accredited by GTC Scotland. The GTCS also sets the Standards which are central to achieving the priorities of teacher education by defining Scotland's expectations of what teachers are and do. GTC Scotland runs the Professional Recognition system and, in line with the requirements of the Council's legislation, is in the process of developing a system of 're-accreditation' for teachers, which is entitled Professional Update.

In case these powers make it sound as though the GTCS can be autocratic and simply do things by diktat, it is worth noting the actual constitution of the GTCS Council and the other checks and balances built in through the legislation. The Council, which sets GTCS policies, has 37 members of whom 19 are elected registered teachers representing Primary, Secondary, FE and ITE. Within the 19 there are 4 places reserved for head teachers, 2 Primary and 2 Secondary. A further 11 members are nominated to the Council from organisations including the universities, local authorities, FE, the two main Scottish churches, and parental organisations. The remaining 7 members are independent, lay appointees who must not be teachers. They are on the Council specifically to represent the

¹ <http://www.gtcs.org.uk/professional-update/professional-recognition.aspx>

² <http://www.legislation.gov.uk/sdsi/2011/9780111012246/contents>

³ <http://www.gtcs.org.uk/web/FILES/about-gtcs/memorandum-on-entry-requirements.pdf>

public interest. Indeed written into the legislation are various requirements for the GTCS to consult before decisions are made and always to work in the public interest:

'The GTCS must have regard to the interests of the public when performing its functions.'
(The Public Services Reform (General Teaching Council for Scotland) Order 2011 Part 2
Section 7)

GTCS and Research

As part of its commitment to achieving the priorities of teacher education GTC Scotland has various involvements with research. It completes its own research into developments in Scotland such as the Teacher Induction Scheme (TIS) and Professional Update but it has also commissioned research from universities into subjects such as partnership in teacher education. Sometimes it has entered into joint research with other organisations to look at topics such as accomplished teaching. It runs a Teacher Researcher Programme funding teachers to complete small-scale research projects. GTC Scotland staff regularly write papers and present at conferences and events. Over the last few years they have presented at conferences and events including those organised by the Scottish Educational Research Association, the British Educational Research Association, the European Conference on Educational Research, the International Council on Education for Teaching, the Association for Teacher Education Europe and, of course, the Teacher Education Advancement Network

International Interest

The model of PSRB presented by GTC Scotland is of interest to other education systems and there are regular international visits to Edinburgh to look at its work. In the last few years representatives from over forty countries have visited and in the first half of 2014 we have had visitors from Belgium and New Zealand while in the autumn we have visits from representatives of the Indian Government and the Government of Bangladesh. GTC Scotland sees such international interest as a means of spreading knowledge about its own role and remit and about the positive ways in which the education system in Scotland works. However, it also sees international visitors as a potential source of information on different approaches to education from other parts of the world; approaches which in turn may help in further supporting the GTCS role in achieving the priorities of teacher education.

Other Teaching Councils

GTC Scotland is therefore strongly aware of how it can learn from international comparisons with other countries which have different forms of teaching council. To that end developments in countries such as Australia, New Zealand and Canada are carefully watched. Some positives are of course found but negatives are also of considerable interest. For example, the changes brought about by the government in British Columbia to the British Columbia College of Teachers following the Avison Report¹ were watched with interest and lessons learned.

Closer to home the developments in the other UK nations which have Teaching Councils (and the Republic of Ireland) are carefully monitored. There are regular meetings of the four nations and different approaches and developments are extensively discussed. For example, current developments with GTC Wales moving towards becoming the Education Workforce Council from 1st April 2015 are of real interest. And of course extensive consideration has been given to the situation in England where the GTCE (General Teaching Council England) was simply abolished by the Westminster Government in 2012. GTC Scotland, while independent of the Scottish Government, is

¹ https://www.bced.gov.bc.ca/pubs/2010_factfinder_report_bcct.pdf

therefore very conscious that anybody set up by legislation can be subsequently reviewed, revised or indeed abolished by further legislation.

Conclusion

At the heart of the role of a Professional Regulatory Body in Achieving the Priorities of Teacher Education are various features. Absolutely centrally there must be trust in the PSRB. Trust (from all sides) has to be earned and thereafter maintained. As has been seen in some other systems, loss of trust creates difficulties for any Regulatory Body and may even lead to its closure. The clear priority of teacher education is to produce well prepared and qualified teachers who successfully provide good quality education for learners. This is ultimately in the public interest so the PSRB must have regard in everything it does to that concept. Factionalism or partiality have no place in the public interest. It is therefore important that all stakeholders realise that PSRBs are not unions looking after the interests of their members.

So how do you build up trust? How do you ensure the public interest is central? How to you avoid factionalism and ensure impartiality? There are of course many steps to be taken but GTC Scotland would contend that openness and transparency are necessary prerequisites and the involvement of stakeholders in discussion, debate and consensus building really matters. Consultation has to be wide and genuine. Stakeholders have to be actively involved and see their views and points being listened to and acted on, where appropriate. If a point is not being accepted then there has to be an explanation of the rationale for its rejection. If stakeholders understand why something is not being done, they may still disagree but be willing to compromise and accept alternatives. All of this depends on communication; communication with individual stakeholders, communication across stakeholders, communication between stakeholders.

As GTC Scotland approaches its 50th anniversary, it plays a central role in delivering the priorities of teacher education in Scotland but it does so by taking the features above strongly into account. It certainly is not complacent or has any sense of resting on its laurels. GTC Scotland is happy to share practices and approaches with others but acknowledges that one model cannot simply be imposed onto the educational, social and political system of another system. To be successful elsewhere, the GTC Scotland model of a Professional Statutory Regulatory Body could not simply be adopted but rather would need to be adapted to meet local circumstances. If GTC Scotland can be of support to other educational system it will be happy to give whatever help it can.

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